

Persecution, Platonism, Gnosticism

Outline

1. Gnosticism

Terms

Gnosis, orthodox, Heresy, Allegory of the Cave, Ring of Gyges, Demiurge, Nag Hammadi, Papyrus, codex

Plato, *Phaedo*

What do you mean, Socrates?

I will tell you, he said. The lovers of knowledge are conscious that their souls, when philosophy receives them, are simply fastened and glued to their bodies: the soul is only able to view existence through the bars of a prison, and not in her own nature; she is wallowing in the mire of all ignorance; and philosophy, seeing the terrible nature of her confinement, and that the captive through desire is led to conspire in her own captivity - philosophy shows her that this is visible and tangible, but that what she sees in her own nature is intellectual and invisible. And the soul of the true philosopher thinks that she ought not to resist this deliverance, and therefore abstains from pleasures and desires and pains and fears, as far as she is able...

Plato, *Timaeus*

Let me tell you then why the creator made this world of generation. He was good, and the good can never have any jealousy of anything. And being free from jealousy, he desired that all things should be as like himself as they could be. This is in the truest sense the origin of creation and of the world, as we shall do well in believing on the testimony of wise men: God desired that all things should be good and nothing bad, so far as this was attainable. Wherefore also finding the whole visible sphere not at rest, but moving in an irregular and disorderly fashion, out of disorder he brought order, considering that this was in every way better than the other. Now the deeds of the best could never be or have been other than the fairest; and the creator, reflecting on the things which are by nature visible, found that no unintelligent creature taken as a whole was fairer than the intelligent taken as a whole; and that intelligence could not be present in anything which was devoid of soul. For which reason, when he was framing the universe, he put intelligence in soul, and soul in body, that he might be the creator of a work which was by nature fairest and best. Wherefore, using the language of probability, we may say that the world became a living creature truly endowed with soul and intelligence by the providence of God.

ORTHODOX

GNOSTIC

CREATION

God = Creator of All

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Dualist

Secret Book of John God is immeasurable light which is pure, holy, and immaculate.... He is not corporeal.

SOURCE OF EVIL

Mankind's Sin

Romans 5:12 as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Demiurge/Matter/Chaos

On the Origin of the World Everybody says that nothing existed prior to chaos... but chaos comes from a shadow, which has been called by the name darkness...

SALVATION

Atonement

Romans 3:23-5 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the *redemption* that is in Christ Jesus whom God has set forth to *atone* for man's sins through his *blood*.

Enlightenment

Gospel of Thomas 1 He who finds the meaning of these words will not taste death...